

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Reference Guide: Commercial Use Permits for Water-based Outfitters and Guides

This reference guide provides information on the permits required to conduct water-based outfitting or guiding using Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks land (FWP). For additional information about commercial use permits please consult the Reference Guide: Commercial Use Permits. Water-based outfitting or guiding includes licensed outfitters and guides (licensed by the Montana Board of Outfitters) and non-licensed outfitters and guides (e.g. whitewater rafting, canoe tours, etc.). Please note that commercial use on FWP land is a privilege, not a right. Authorization may be denied, amended, or revoked at any time for cause.

There are two types of commercial use permits for water-based outfitters and guides:

- 1) Fishing Access Site Permit
- 2) Restricted Use Permit

Fishing Access Site (FAS) Permit

- All water-based outfitters and guides must obtain a FAS Permit to conduct commercial use at FWP fishing access sites. Exception: An outfitter (licensed or non-licensed) who has a FWP Restricted Use Permit to operate on a Restricted River and does not use any FWP sites on other rivers does not have to obtain the FAS Permit. Guides (licensed or non-licensed) must have a FAS Permit to use a FWP fishing access site.
- The FAS Permit is only available to fishing outfitters and guides, whitewater outfitters and guides, and canoe or kayak outfitters and guides. These are individuals who are providing water-based guide services. All other types of commercial use at fishing access sites must obtain a Restricted Use Permit (e.g. dive lessons, kayak lessons, boat rentals or demos, dock builders, etc.).
- The FAS Permit does not authorize a guide to serve as a licensed outfitter. The FAS Permit does not negate or replace Montana Board of Outfitters licensing requirements.
- The FAS Permit is available at any FWP regional office, external license provider, on the FWP web site: www.fwp.mt.gov (Online Services – Licenses and Applications) or you may request a paper application.
- An ALS Number is required to obtain a FAS Permit. You will need to obtain the permit at a FWP regional office or external license provider if you do not have an ALS Number.
- Fishing outfitters and guides will need to provide their Board of Outfitters License #.
- The FAS Permit is valid for one license year (March 1 through the last day of February).
- The FAS Permit Fee is \$100 annually.

Restricted Use Permit

- A water-based outfitter (licensed or non-licensed) must obtain a Restricted Use Permit to conduct commercial use at FWP fishing access sites on Restricted Rivers and at FWP State Parks.
- There are six restricted rivers in the state: Beaverhead, Big Hole, Blackfoot, Madison, Smith, and the Alberton Gorge of the Clark Fork. With the exception of the Blackfoot and Madison Rivers, opportunities to conduct commercial use on these rivers are limited.
- Please contact an FWP Regional Office for information on obtaining a Restricted Use Permit to conduct water-based outfitting on a Restricted River or State Park.

Licensed Hunting Outfitters

- Commercial hunting outfitting is prohibited on all FWP lands. FWP may authorize a commercial hunting outfitter to use a fishing access site solely for the purpose of gaining access to water bodies where they are authorized to conduct use. A FAS Permit is required.

Phone (406) 444-3888 or email csperry@mt.gov for more information on conducting commercial use on FWP land.